

AFRICAN AMERICAN FICTION READER'S ADVISORY

KDLA
2018

HISTORY

- ◉ Rich and storied tradition
- ◉ Spans from slave narratives and the Harlem Renaissance to Urban fiction and romance
- ◉ Charles W. Chestnutt (1858-1932)
- ◉ Harlem Renaissance (Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman), 1920's-1930's
- ◉ Great Depression
- ◉ Civil Rights
- ◉ Black arts era
- ◉ Black power era



CURRENT

- Covers all genres and started its own: Urban Fiction
- Awards: BCALA Literary Awards and Street Lit Book Award Medal
- Beginning of 20th century, popularity of self-published “street lit”

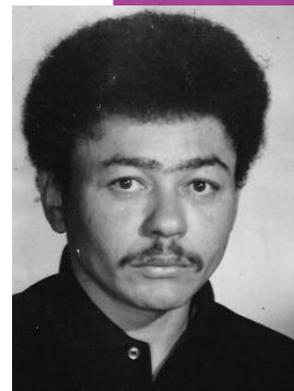


URBAN FICTION

- ◉ A.k.a. Street Lit; Urban Lit.; Ghetto fiction; Hip Hop Lit.; Gangsta Lit.
- ◉ Two main types: Street Fiction and Urban Erotica
- ◉ Portrays the struggles, triumphs, & tragedies of African American characters told in the language of the streets
- ◉ Explicit stories of drug dealers, pimps, sex workers, etc. and focuses on urban violence, sexuality, and racism.
- ◉ Themes of survival and the code of the streets
- ◉ Popular in American cities with a large African American population.
- ◉ Controversial

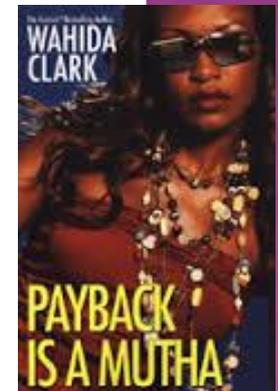
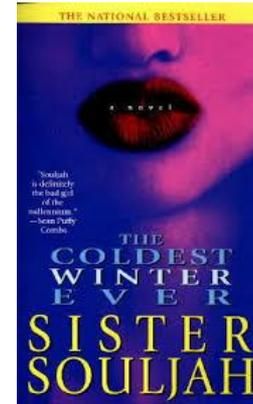
EARLY URBAN FICTION

- ◉ Origins in a small publishing house called Holloway House in the early 1970's
- ◉ Black crime fiction/"black experience" fiction
- ◉ Robert Beck (Iceberg Slim) & Donald Goines-pioneers
- ◉ Renaissance of lesser know authors in the later 1970's: Roland Jefferson & Odie Hawkins
- ◉ At the same time and forward-movement of middle-class black professionals from the ghettos to the suburbs and mainstream careers
- ◉ Authors: John Edgar Wideman, Paule Marshall, Andrea Lee, Jake Lamar



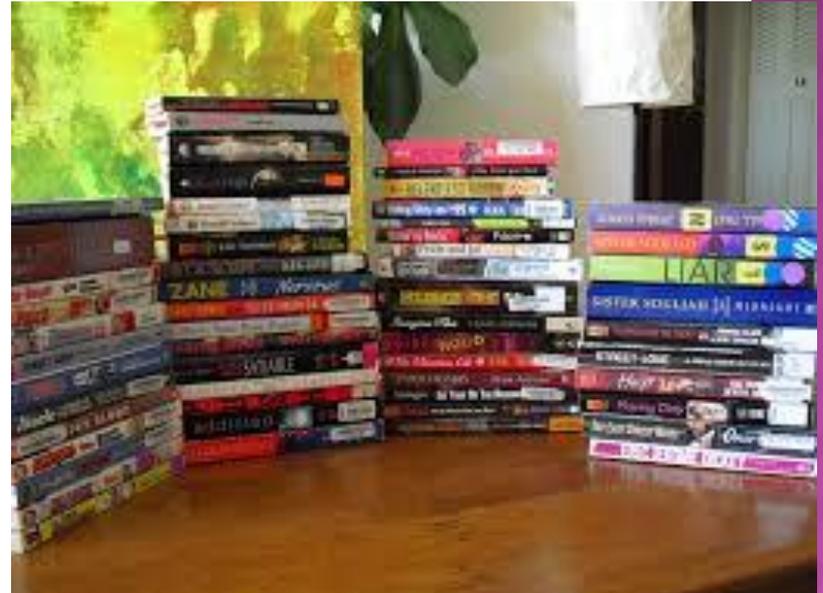
URBAN FICTION FORERUNNERS

- ◉ True To The Game by Teri Woods (1998)
- ◉ The Coldest Winter Ever by Sister Souljah (1999)
- ◉ Let That Be The Reason by Vickie M. Stringer (2001)
- ◉ A Hustler's Wife by Nikki Turner (2003)
- ◉ “Driving force” in African American Publishing: Urban Books, Teri Woods Publishing, Stringer's Triple Crown Publishing
- ◉ Other publishers: Augustus, Cartel, Melodrama, Strebor
- ◉ More current popular authors: K'wan Foye, Shannon Holmes, Shannon Turner, Wahida Clark
- ◉ Highly changeable & dynamic authors; new ones every month



APPEAL & CHARACTERISTICS

- ◉ Authentic voice and rhythm (authors)
- ◉ Soundtrack is rap music
- ◉ Similar to fictional and true crime stories
- ◉ Usually in trilogies or series with one main character or a large cast of characters
- ◉ Fast-paced and dialogue driven
- ◉ High degree of suspense
- ◉ There is a lighter side



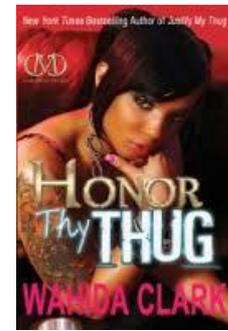
STREET FICTION

⊙ Popular themes:

- Love stories
- Coming-of-age
- Gangster sagas
- Bad girls
- Short stories and novellas

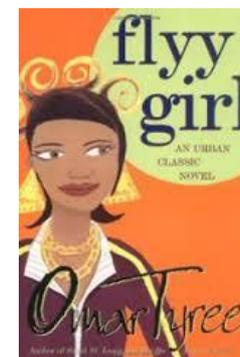
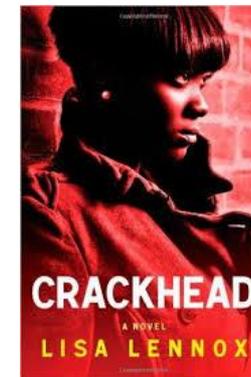
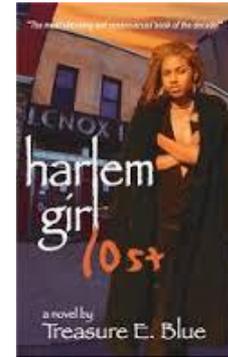
LOVE STORIES

- ◉ Tracy Brown: *Black* and *The Dime Piece* series
- ◉ Wahida Clark: *Thug* series
- ◉ Keisha Ervin: *Chyna Black*, *Torn*, *Material Girl*
- ◉ Tu-Shonda L. Whitaker: *Flip Side of the Game* series
- ◉ Teri Woods: *True To The Game* series
- ◉ Shannon Holmes: *B-More Careful*
- ◉ Chunichi: *A Gangster's Girl Saga*, *Return of a Gangster's Girl*
- ◉ Treasure Hernandez: *The Flint Saga*
- ◉ De'nesha Diamond: *Hustlin' Divas*



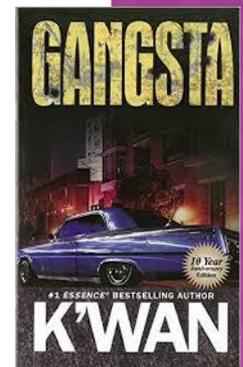
COMING-OF-AGE

- ◉ T.N. Baker: The Sheisty Series
- ◉ Mark Anthony: *Lady's Night*
- ◉ Treasure E. Blue: Harlem Girl Lost series
- ◉ Tracy Brown: *Criminal Minded* and The Snapped series
- ◉ Endy: In My Hood series
- ◉ Jihad: *Baby Girl*
- ◉ D. (Kenji Jasper): Got series
- ◉ Sister Souljah: The Coldest Winter Ever series
- ◉ Lisa Lennox: Crack Head series
- ◉ Vickie Stringer: Let That Be The Reason series
- ◉ Nikki Turner: *Riding Dirty on I-95*
- ◉ Omar Tyree: *Flyy Girl*



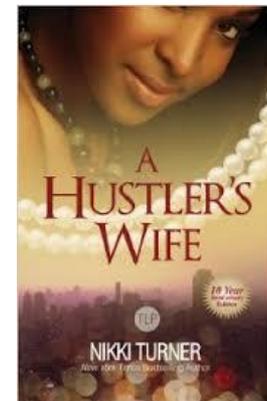
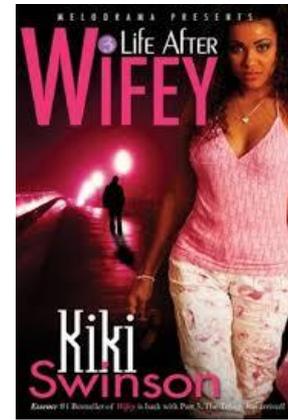
GANGSTER SAGAS

- ◉ Wahida Clark: Payback Is a Mutha series
- ◉ JaQuavis Coleman: The Cartel series and The Dopeman's Trilogy
- ◉ Quentin Carter: *Amongst Thieves*
- ◉ CA\$H: *Bonded By Blood*
- ◉ Erick S. Gray: Crave All Lose All serie
- ◉ Joy King (aka Deja): Stackin' Paper series
- ◉ K'wan: *Gangsta: An Urban Tragedy, Hoodlum, and The Hood Rat* series
- ◉ Teri Woods: The Dutch series and The Deadly Reigns series



BAD GIRLS

- ◉ Deja King (aka Joy): Bitch series
- ◉ Vickie M. Stringer: The Dirty Red series
- ◉ Kiki Swinson: Wifey series
- ◉ Meesha Mink: Real Wifey series
- ◉ Nikki Turner: Hustler's Wife series
- ◉ Karen Williams: *Dirty To The Grave*



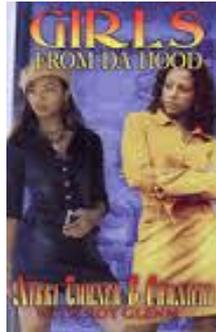
SHORT STORIES/NOVELLAS/NONFICTION

- ◉ *Nikki Turner Presents . . .Street Chronicles series*

- ◉ *Girls from Da Hood series*

- ◉ *Around The Way Girls series*

- ◉ *Jay-Z: Decoded*

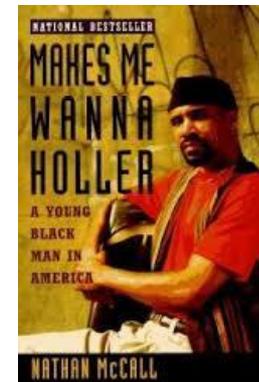


- ◉ *Nathan McCall: Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America*

- ◉ *Felicia “Snoop” Pearson & David Ritz: Grace After Midnight: A Memoir*

- ◉ *Tupak Shakur: The Rose that Grew from Concrete*

- ◉ *Karrine Steffans: Confessions of a Video Vixen*



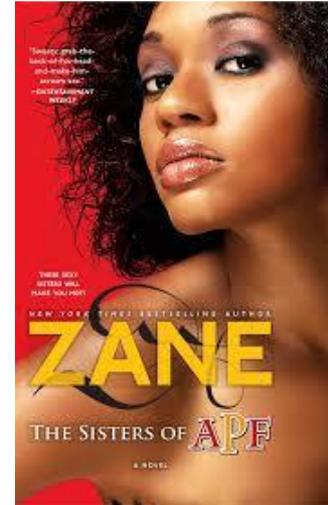
URBAN EROTICA

- ◉ Sexual relations take center stage with street life sometimes as the backdrop
- ◉ Zane is the genre pioneer
- ◉ Due to the subject matter, Urban Erotica is found mainly in short story anthologies. There are a few full-length novels.



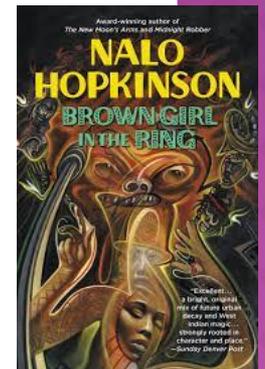
URBAN EROTICA TITLES/AUTHORS

- ◉ Allison Hobbs: Double Dippin series
- ◉ Mark Anthony: *Dogism*
- ◉ Pynk: *Sexaholics*
- ◉ Noire: *Candy Licker*, *G-Spot*, and *Unzipped*
- ◉ Zane: Addicted series
- ◉ Short Stories: Flexin' and Sexin' series; Sex Chronicles series and Flava series by Zane



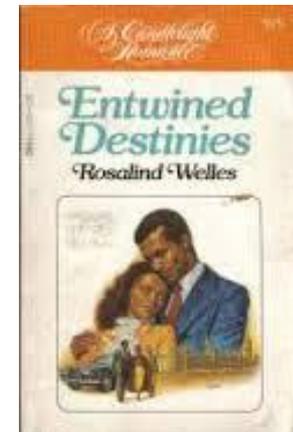
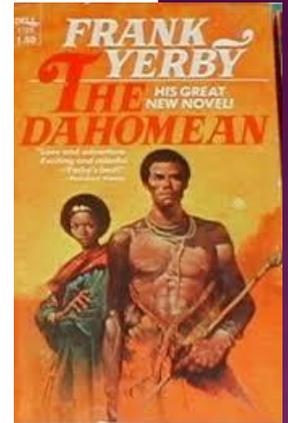
SCIENCE FICTION

- ◉ Until the 1970's: Samuel R. Delany
- ◉ African Americans have traditionally not read because they don't identify with any of the characters
- ◉ History of slavery rewritten: Africans as masters and Warlocks, Europeans as slaves
- ◉ Octavia Butler: *Kindred* & *Wild Seed*, writes from a black perspective, but themes are universal, more accessible to the average reader
- ◉ Steven Barnes/Tanavarie Due
- ◉ Nalo Hopkinson: *Brown Girl In The Ring* (1998)
- ◉ Authors inject rhythms takes from histories in Africa, the U.S., & the Caribbean
- ◉ New science fiction often called speculative fiction
- ◉ Short story writers: Linda Addison & Nisi Shawl



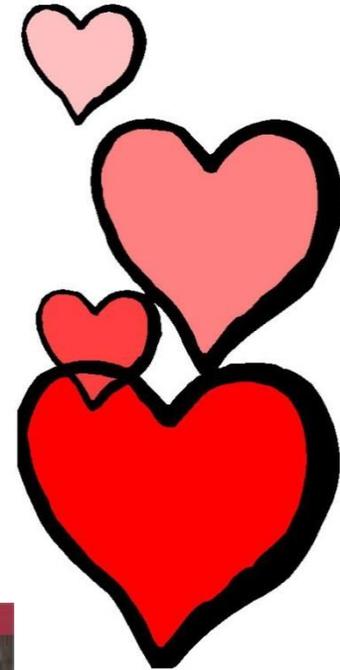
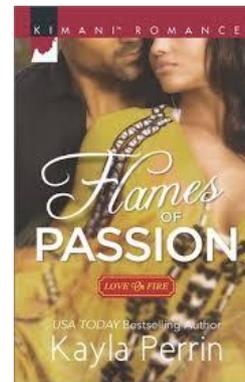
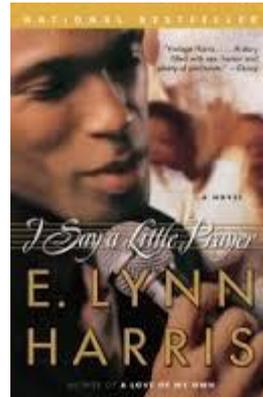
ROMANCE

- ◉ Early contributor: Frank Yerby with *Speak Now: A Modern Novel* (1969); *The Dahomean: An Historical Novel* (1971); and its sequel, *A Darkness in Ingraham's Crest* (1979)
- ◉ Short story authors turned novelists: Francis Ray, Sinclair LeBeau, Donna Hill, and Loure Bussey
- ◉ *Entwined Destinies* by Rosalind Welles (real name Elsie B. Washington)-possibly the first African American romance novel written by an African American author (1980)
- ◉ Sandra Kitt's *Adam & Eva*



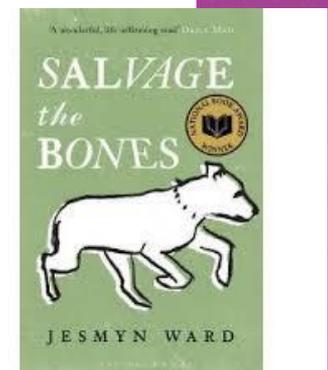
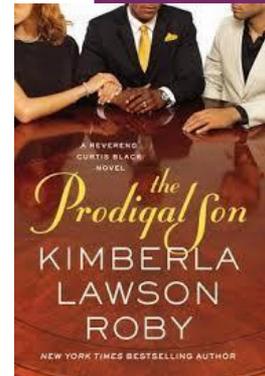
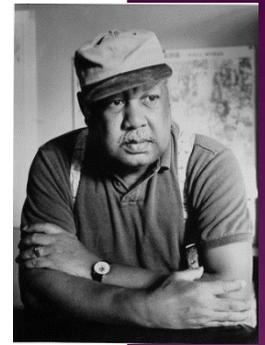
ROMANCE AUTHORS OF YESTERDAY & TODAY

- ◉ Sandra Kitt
- ◉ Francis Ray
- ◉ Anita Richmond Bunkley
- ◉ Lynn Emery
- ◉ E. Lynn Harris
- ◉ Donna Hill
- ◉ Rochelle Alers
- ◉ Kayla Perrin



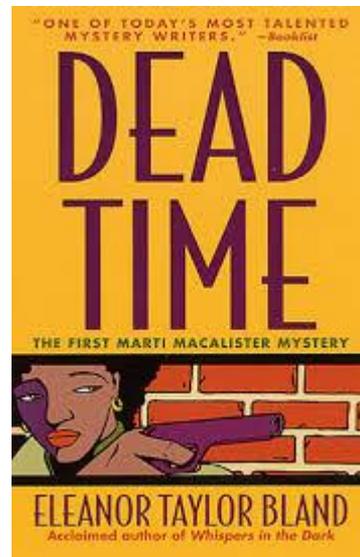
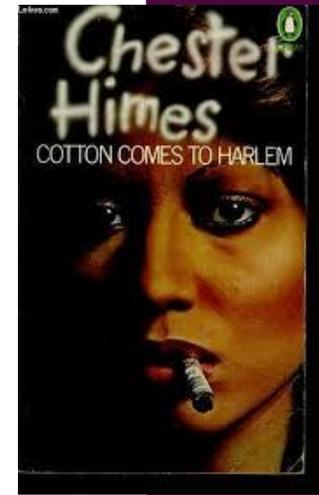
GENERAL FICTION

- Well known: Terry McMillan, Bebe Moore Campbell, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, Eric Jerome Dickey, Carl Weber, James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston
- Colson Whitehead, Pat G'Orge-Walker, Shelton Johnson, Tiphanie Yanique, Kimberla Lawson Roby
- Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage The Bones*(2011) and Marlon James' *The Book of Night Women* (2010)



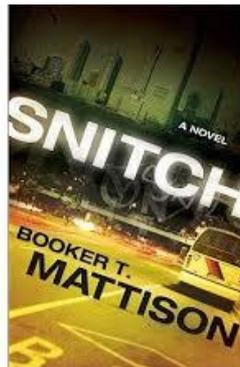
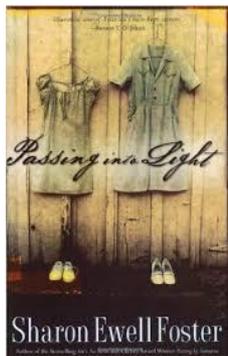
MYSTERY/SUSPENSE

- ◉ Early authors: Rudolph Fisher, Walter A. Roberts, Chester Himes, Ishmael Reed, Nikki Baker, Barbara Neely, Gar Anthony Haywood
- ◉ Walter Mosley-Easy Rawlins mysteries
- ◉ Attica Locke
- ◉ Nora DeLoach
- ◉ Eleanor Taylor Bland
- ◉ Paula L. Woods



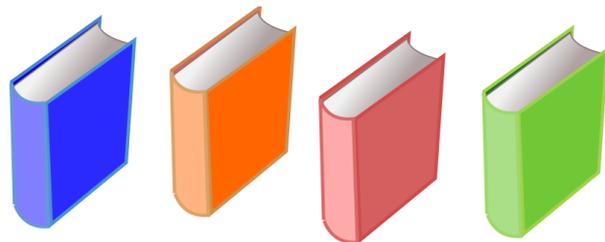
CHRISTIAN FICTION

- ◉ Dilemma-goes in Christian Fiction or African American Fiction?
- ◉ “Christian themes are part of the moral and philosophical fabric of who [African-Americans] are as a people”-Mattison
- ◉ New(er): Tia McCollors, Kimberley Cash Tate and Booker T. Mattison
- ◉ Veterans: Victoria Christopher Murray, Sharon Ewell Foster, & Vanessa Davis Griggs



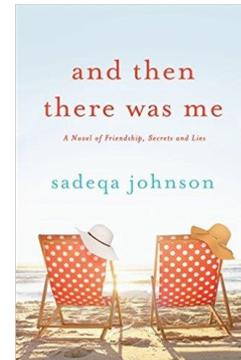
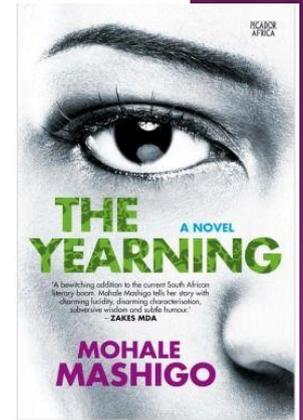
WHEN DOING R.A.

- ◉ African American readers usually like personal recommendations rather than canned advertisements when it comes to books.
- ◉ Enjoy book clubs because they want to talk about what they read.
- ◉ Reading is a social activity.
- ◉ Readers of Urban Fiction are diverse so don't assume or stereotype. Most Urban Fiction readers are African American, but don't assume that all African Americans want to read Urban Fiction.
- ◉ Don't assume that your library lacks the audience for Urban Fiction. Purchase some and display them and see if they circulate.



BRAND NEW TITLES

- ◉ *If Only For One Night* by Victoria Christopher Murray & ReShonda Tate Billingsley
- ◉ *Seeking Sarah: A Novel* by ReShonda Tate Billingsley
- ◉ *Finding Gideon* by Eric Jerome Dickey
- ◉ *Jazz Moon* by Joe Okonkwo
- ◉ *The Yearning: A Novel* by Mohale Mashigo
- ◉ *No Loyalty* by De’Nesha Diamond
- ◉ *Hustle Hard (If It Ain’t About The Money, book 2)* by Sandra
- ◉ *The Banks Sisters Complete (Book 4 in a series)* by Nikki Turner
- ◉ *And Then There Was Me* by Sadeqa Johnson
- ◉ *Games Women Play* by Zaire Crown
- ◉ *Best Laid Plans* by Brenda Jackson



RESOURCES

- ◉ Streetfiction.org
- ◉ Go On Girl: <http://www.goongirl.org/index.php>
- ◉ Holt, Karen. *Shades of Black Fiction*. Publishers Weekly, 12/8/2003, Vol. 250, Issue 49, pgs. 16-17.
- ◉ Osborne, Gwendolyn. *Romance: How black romance—novels, that is—came to be*. Black Issues Book Review. Jan/Feb2003, Vol. 4 Issue 1, p50.
- ◉ *Genreflecting: a Guide to Popular Reading Interests*, 7th ed., c2013.

RESOURCES, CONT.

- ◉ <http://www.wrl.org/books-and-reading/adults/100-african-american-writers-mostly-fiction>
- ◉ <http://www.cincinnati.library.org/booklists/?id=africanamericanwriters>
- ◉ <http://aalbc.com/>
- ◉ *The DOLLUS Syndrome: Diversity in Crime Fiction*. Sara Paretsky. Booklist, May 1, 2015, Vol. 111 Issue 17, p10-11.
- ◉ *Christian Fiction for African-Americans: A Dilemma*. Joshunda Sanders. Publishers Weekly. 12/12/2011, Vol. 258 Issue 50, p24.
- ◉ *Why Blacks Should Read (and Write) Science Fiction*. Charles R. Saunders. American Visions. Oct/Nov2000, Vol. 15 Issue 5, p30.
- ◉ *The Voices of Black Fiction*. Beth Farrell. Library Journal. 10/1/2012, Vol. 137 Issue 16, p38.
- ◉ *Black Writers Bring a Different Perspective to Sci-Fi*. Kristina Nwazota. Black Issues Book Review. Jan/Feb2003, Vol. 4 Issue 1, p28-30.
- ◉ *Isn't it romantic?* Paula L. Woods. Essence (Essence). July97, Vol. 28 Issue 3, p75.
- ◉ *African-American Detective Fiction Writers, Heroes, and Heroines*.
Ehrich, William E. Paper presented at the Annual Fall Language Arts Conference (Bloomington, IN, November 1993)